

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A shoe for a horse comprising a body made from a thermoplastic composition which comprises a matrix of a thermoplastic material which has a softening point of less than 100°C, the body having a lower ground-contacting surface for contact, in use, with the ground and an upper foot-contacting surface spaced from the lower ground-contacting surface for contacting, in use, an underside of a foot of a horse, the body having around at least a part of its upper foot-contacting surface an upstanding peripheral flange portion adapted in use to abut against a lower part of a hoof horn wall of the foot of a horse, whereby, upon immersing the shoe in hot water for a period of time sufficient to soften the shoe, the flange portion can thereafter be manually moulded to the outer surface of the hoof horn wall and caused to interlock with previously formed indentations in the hoof horn wall.
2. A shoe according to claim 1, wherein the upstanding peripheral flange portion tapers in section from a root of the flange portion towards an upper free rim portion of the flange portion.
3. A shoe according to claim 2, wherein the thermoplastic material has a freezing point of at least about 30°C and a melting point or melting point range of less than about 95°C.
4. A shoe according to claim 1, wherein the thermoplastic material is a polycaprolactone having a freezing point of about 35°C, and a melting point range of from about 58°C to about 60°C.
5. A shoe according to claim 1, wherein the thermoplastic material is a polyester of ε-caprolactone and butane-1,4-diol.
6. A shoe according to claim 5, wherein the thermoplastic material has a freezing point of about 35°C, and a melting point range of from about 58°C to about 60°C.
7. A shoe according to claim 1, wherein the upstanding peripheral

flange portion is from about 10 mm to about 20 mm high.

8. A shoe according to claim 1, wherein the body comprises an arcuate bar portion shaped to underlie the hoof and wherein the bar portion has two ends joined one to another at a rear end of the shoe by a crosspiece.

9. A shoe according to claim 1, wherein the shoe includes a frogpiece intended to underlie a frog of a horse's foot.

10. A shoe according to claim 9, wherein the frogpiece is provided with a cutout portion that extends from a rearward end of the frogpiece part way towards a front end of the frogpiece.

11. A shoe according to claim 1, wherein the flange portion includes an upstanding rear flange portion adapted to abut against heels of the hoof.

12. A shoe according to claim 1, wherein a chamfered portion is formed on an underside of the shoe at its front end so as to underlie a toe of the horse's hoof, in use.

13. A shoe according to claim 1, wherein the hoof has a toe and has a heel on each of a pair of opposite side walls and wherein the flange portion is adapted so as to extend, in use, from a heel of one side wall around the toe of the hoof to the heel of the opposite side wall of the hoof.

14. A shoe according to claim 1, wherein the hoof has a toe and has a heel on each of a pair of opposite side walls and wherein the flange portion is adapted to extend, in use, from the toe of the hoof back towards each of the heels of the hoof a distance which is less than the overall distance between the  
5 toe and the respective one of the heels.

15. A shoe according to claim 1, wherein the flange portion tapers in section from a thickness of about 5 mm at its root to about 3 mm at its upper free rim.

16. A shoe according to claim 1, wherein the body is about 10 mm deep and the flange portion extends upwards from the body for about 10 mm, so as to give an overall height to the shoe of about 20 mm.

17. A shoe according to claim 1, wherein the shoe is provided on its lower surface with a plurality of tungsten studs or other non-slip grip-enhancing devices.

18. A shoe according to claim 1, wherein the thermoplastic composition further comprises a filler material.

19. A shoe according to claim 18, wherein the filler material comprises a rubber in crumb form.

20. A shoe according to claim 1, wherein the lower surface of the body is provided with at least one rubber insert.

21. A shoe for fitting to a hoof of a horse comprising a body made from a thermoplastic composition which comprises a matrix of a thermoplastic material which has a softening point of less than 100°C, the body having a lower ground-contacting surface for contact, in use, with the ground and an upper foot-contacting surface spaced from the lower ground-contacting surface for contacting, in use, an underside of a foot of a horse, the body having around at least a part of its upper foot-contacting surface an upstanding peripheral flange portion adapted in use to abut against at least a part of an outer surface of a horny wall of the hoof of a horse and a chamfered portion on an underside of the shoe at its front end so as to underlie a toe of the hoof, in use, and to provide a bevelled edge sloping in an upwardly outward direction from the underside, whereby clearance of the toe of the hoof over the ground is facilitated and whereby, upon immersing the shoe in hot water for a period of time sufficient to soften the shoe, the flange portion can thereafter be manually moulded to the outer surface of the hoof horn wall and caused to interlock with previously formed indentations in the hoof horn wall.

22. A shoe for a hoofed animal comprising a body made from a

thermoplastic composition which comprises a matrix of a thermoplastic material which has a softening point of less than 100°C and further comprises a rubber in crumb form as a filler material, the body having a lower ground-contacting surface for contact, in use, with the ground and an upper foot-contacting surface spaced from the lower ground-contacting surface for contacting, in use, an underside of a foot of a hoofed animal, the body having around at least a part of its upper foot-contacting surface an upstanding peripheral flange portion adapted in use to abut against at least a part of an outer wall of the foot of a hoofed animal.

23. A shoe for a horse comprising a body made from a thermoplastic composition which comprises a matrix of a thermoplastic material which has a softening point of less than 100°C, the body having a lower ground-contacting surface for contact, in use, with the ground and an upper foot-contacting surface spaced from the lower ground-contacting surface for contacting, in use, an underside of a foot of a horse, the body having around at least a part of its upper foot-contacting surface an upstanding peripheral flange portion which is adapted in use to abut against at least a part of an outer wall of the foot of a horse and which tapers in section from a root of the flange portion towards an upper free rim portion of the flange portion.

24. A shoe for a horse comprising a body made from a thermoplastic composition which comprises a matrix of a thermoplastic material which has a softening point of less than 100°C, the body having a lower ground-contacting surface for contact, in use, with the ground and an upper foot-contacting surface spaced from the lower ground-contacting surface for contacting, in use, an underside of a foot of a horse, the body having around at least a part of its upper foot-contacting surface an upstanding peripheral flange portion which is from about 10 mm to about 20 mm high and is adapted in use to abut against at least a part of a hoof horn wall of the foot of a horse, whereby, upon immersing the shoe in hot water for a period of time sufficient to soften the shoe, the flange portion can thereafter be manually moulded to the outer surface of the hoof horn wall.

25. A shoe for a horse comprising a body made from a thermoplastic

- composition which comprises a matrix of a thermoplastic material which has a softening point of less than 100°C, the body having a lower ground-contacting surface for contact, in use, with the ground and an upper foot-contacting surface spaced from the lower ground-contacting surface for contacting, in use, an
- 5 underside of a foot of a horse, the body having around at least a part of its upper foot-contacting surface an upstanding peripheral flange portion adapted in use to abut against a lower part only of an outer wall of the foot of a horse.